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DEPT FOR EUR/AGS (SAINT ANDRE), EUR/PRA, AND ISN/CB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/10/2017  
TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [CBW](#) [AU](#)  
SUBJECT: AUSTRIA: RESPONSE ON INFORMATION EXCHANGE AT  
UPCOMING AUSTRALIA GROUP PLENARY

Classified By: STATE 58355

11. (C) EconPolOff discussed reftel demarche on May 9 with Alexander Benedict from the Austrian Foreign Ministry's Department of Arms Control, Disarmament, and Non-Proliferation and urged the GoA to make a presentation at the upcoming Australia Group (AG) Plenary meeting. Benedict mentioned that he, along with officials from the Ministry of Economy and Austrian military intelligence service (HNA), attended the last Plenary meeting in Paris. Benedict noted that only people from the Austrian secret services could answer the reftel questions on Russia's chemical and biological weapons program and on Iranian procurement. He plans to share the reftel questions with the HNA and said he will encourage them to make a statement on these topics if they have any information. On Russia, Benedict did say that Austria is still skeptical about its interest in joining the AG.

12. (C) Post would appreciate any information ISN/CB or EUR/PRA can provide on the following questions posed by Benedict. First, Benedict asked if the U.S. is still opposed to Croatia's application for membership in the AG. This was a topic at the last plenary and he said the EU strongly supports Croatia's application. Second, Benedict asked if the U.S. has seen a copy of the agenda for the Plenary.

13. (SBU) Benedict said that someone from the Austrian Embassy in Paris will head the Austrian delegation to the June Plenary.  
Kilner